



# 2024 LEGISLATIVE & POLICY PRIORITIES

*Approved by the OAPA Board of Directors November 18, 2023*

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit educational organization of more than 800 planning professionals from across the state who work for cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, universities, and private firms.

We provide leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting planning education and empowerment for all residents, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. OAPA supports sustainable communities and works to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by helping to create and stabilize places that are equitable, healthy, and resilient and provide ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Below are **OAPA's 2024 legislative and policy priorities** intended to guide the Chapter's participation in policy development and rulemaking at the state and federal levels. OAPA supports policies, rules, and programs, including technical and financial resources, that advance its legislative and policy priorities, including the following specific actions or intentions.

## Four Top Priorities

OAPA's top four Legislative and Policy Priorities are of equal importance.

### **1. Advance racial equity, environmental justice and climate justice in land-use planning participation and decision-making outcomes**

Anti-racism must be centered in Oregon's policy and planning work with an emphasis on intersectionality. A deliberate effort will be made to advance racial equity and combat systemic racism in the state.

There is substantial evidence and leading policy networks that encourage leading with racial equity as this is highly impactful at meeting equity needs regarding gender and disability. By leading with racial equity we can move the dial for other underserved communities and in particular with regards to rental housing.

Historic, institutional and traditional planning processes and community engagement in Oregon have failed to meaningfully provide opportunities for inclusive participation and incorporate the voices and perspectives of historically and currently underserved

populations. This has resulted in inequitable outcomes for racial equity, environmental justice and climate justice.

Governments and institutions have a duty to pursue anti-racist laws and policies. It is critical to recognize that government in the U.S. and Oregon was set up to serve white male landowners and to oppress and exploit Black and Indigenous people and to disposses them of their land. The legacy of this system is still with us today. To be truly in service to the communities we serve, laws and policies must deliberately counter this racist and exploitative legacy.

State and local planning work and projects must incorporate community benefits that bring measurable, permanent improvements to the lives of affected residents - particularly those in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color - and must minimize or mitigate disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color, lower-income residents, and other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

Planning professionals must collaborate and communicate with community-based organizations to build trust and sustain partnerships. This will help planners better understand and advocate for policies and programs that increase access to resources and opportunities, support community development, and empower Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, while helping ensure that policies minimize or mitigate disproportionate negative impacts on such communities.

Advancing environmental justice requires acknowledging and addressing the inequitable environmental and health impacts to underserved populations with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of land use laws, regulations, policies and decisions.

Advancing climate justice requires acknowledging and addressing the inequitable impacts to underserved populations.

#### **OAPA supports:**

Updating Goal 1 to:

- Proactively seeking legislation that requires LCDC to update, by amendment and rule-making, State Plan Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement) (Public Involvement) to ensure that State and local jurisdictional planning and land use decision-making utilizes policies and implementation practices that address racial equity, environmental justice and climate justice.
- Legislation that addresses systematic racism (e.g., hiring practices, procurement and contracting barriers that prevent community-based organizations from collaborating with state, regional and local agencies, and disproportionate policing) and acknowledges past harm and commits to adopting a more equitable paradigm.
- Legislation that promotes equitable, integrated strategies at the state and local level to reduce risk and improve the ability of all individuals, communities, and the natural and built environments to withstand, recover from, and adapt to changes from natural hazards, climate change, human-made disasters, and economic shifts while centering the needs of communities who are on the “front lines” of climate change and environmental pollution and are experiencing the greatest harms from these crises.
- Aligning with frontline, impacted, or allied groups to ensure that policies advance funding for the planning and development of infrastructure that can be well planned, designed, constructed, and maintained at local and regional levels to support equitable local economic and community development, accessibility, livability, sustainability, and resilience.

- Advancing environmental and climate justice to address inequities and prioritizing vulnerable communities in recovery and resiliency strategies.
- Legislation that advances policies and programs that support equitable development – an approach to reduce disparities in underserved communities with a focus on healthy, vibrant and resilient mixed use neighborhoods.
- Encouraging communities to make infrastructure decisions that advance equity, and prioritize complete streets for all while ensuring equitable access for underserved communities.
- Support for communities most impacted by climate change: Prioritizing planning and financial assistance for BIPOC and other underserved communities and centering their voices when developing policy.

**OAPA opposes:**

- Doing nothing with respect to Goal 1. OAPA opposes any legislative efforts to maintain the status quo or any language and message that worsens existing inequities in the Oregon planning system.
- Policies that lead to the displacement of local residents in rebuilding efforts as well as hazard mitigation planning.
- Economic development that does not create family-wage jobs for women, communities of color, or other underserved or population.

## **2. Confront and reverse climate change**

Oregon needs to act now to confront climate change to quickly, safely, and equitably reverse climate change. And in the interim to mitigate, and adapt to its impacts.

**OAPA supports:**

- Whole system solutions: Advocating for holistic solutions and strategies for stopping and combating climate change effectively.
- Science-based climate solutions and strategies including carbon neutral/negative land uses and land sinks.
- Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to a safe historical baseline: Promoting GHG reduction through integrated land use and transportation planning; resource and habitat preservation, protection and enhancement; increased equitable access to sustainable and active transportation projects; shared mobility initiatives and infrastructure improvements for electric vehicles and transit, bicycles and pedestrians.
- State climate legislation and rulemaking: Supporting state climate legislation and rulemaking including its implementation that ensures Oregon's planning program works to arrest and reverse climate change.
- Implementation of land use planning related Sections of HB 3409-enrolled passed in the 2023 Session.
- Creating a new Goal 20 in the Statewide Land Use Planning Goals to address climate change (or other appropriate vehicle), and any changes needed to existing goals, to include the need to reduce GHG emissions, and to promote carbon sequestration. The new goal should include strategies to mitigate and adapt to and ultimately reverse climate change. Incorporating the new goal into local comprehensive plans means that communities plan climate change impacts as well as local strategies to reverse climate change. Comprehensive plans should include locally-tailored science-based solutions such as low impact or sustainable land uses and land sinks to address and combat climate change.

- Collaboration and advocacy: Collaborating with frontline, impacted, and allied groups to advocate for state and federal actions and funding that prioritizes environmental justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This includes supporting green projects carbon neutral and carbon negative development, job creation, training program and transitioning to a low local economic development; encourage community amenities that improve health outcomes; create climate-friendly jobs that provide for professional and living wages; help increase participation in job training and job placement, including increasing the percentage of job training and climate-smart training programs and targeting participation from underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable communities; and ease the transition to a carbon neutral economy.
- Coordination and funding for climate action: Advocating for more coordination and funding for state agencies to effectively address climate change. Prioritizing infrastructure projects that address climate change, resiliency, and equity with federal and state appropriations.
- Support for communities most impacted by climate change: Prioritizing planning and financial assistance for BIPOC and other underserved communities and centering their voices when developing policy.
- Funding for the replacement, upgrades, and hardening of infrastructure, including, bridges, and culverts.
- Strategies for long term climate adaptation responses that reduce impacts to communities, infrastructure, and natural resources.

**OAPA opposes:**

- Legislation that leads to a net increase in GHG emissions.
- Efforts that diminish the state's commitment to responding to climate change, including agencies' work toward the goals outlined in Executive Order 20-04.

### **3. Address the housing crisis and housing underproduction**

OAPA's advocacy aims to address the housing crisis comprehensively and ensure that all Oregonians have access to safe, stable and affordable housing options. We recognize the urgent housing crisis in Oregon, and advocate for solutions to increase housing availability, affordability, and choices for Oregonians across the state. Our focus is on ending homelessness through access to affordable and supportive housing.

**OAPA supports:**

- Preserving and expanding affordable housing: Prioritizing safe, stable and affordable housing for low to moderate-income households, encompassing rental and ownership opportunities of appropriate housing types.
- Homelessness prevention and solutions: working to prevent and end homelessness while preserving and maintaining existing affordable housing, including housing for diverse populations with unique needs.
- Emergency Shelter Capacity: expanding emergency shelter bed inventory to ensure the safety of vulnerable populations.
- Infrastructure Development: Providing needed infrastructure to areas within urban growth boundaries to facilitate development.
- Innovations in affordable housing: Encouraging innovations and supporting research to explore solutions for affordable housing challenges.
- State funding and grants to local governments to assist in making land within existing UGB expansion areas that are designated for housing and related land uses "shovel ready". Such funding could support needed activities such as land use

- planning, forming development agreements and constructing/financing infrastructure.
- State funding to local governments for assessing and then updating existing development codes to remove barriers to housing production and supply.
- Funding and technical assistance: advocating for increased funding and technical assistance to help meet their housing needs, including adequate infrastructure funding for water, sewer, and transportation.
- Legislation for housing stability: Supporting legislation that promotes housing stability and addresses displacement concerns, with attention to historically and systematically marginalized communities.
- Connected, complete communities: Promoting housing in well-connected, complete communities with easy access to schools, jobs, services, transportation options and amenities (food and household necessities, cultural centers, places of worship, recreation, open space). – with convenient access to transit and other transportation options.
- Implementation of HB 2003 (2019), the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis.
- Streamlined permitting: Providing pre-approved plans for middle housing to provide a level of certainty for homebuilders and to expedite the permitting process.

#### **OAPA opposes:**

- Legislation that would cap or limit the ability of jurisdictions to adequately fund infrastructure through system development charges (SDCs).
- Significant amendments to the land use program that would undermine or fundamentally alter the UGB and local authority for planning and zoning in response to the housing crisis.
- Legislation that would impose overly broad blanket mandatory preemptions to local codes that override health, safety, environmental and natural hazard protections.
- Legislation that would shift the burden of proof to local jurisdictions (instead of applicants) for development applications.
- Housing development in wetlands. Increased development in wetlands destroys habitat, complicates stormwater management and flood hazard mitigation efforts. Additionally, because of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that forced the EPA to remove federal protections from approximately 63% of U.S. wetlands it is now more important than ever that Oregon maintain strong protections for wetlands.
- Preemption of local tree codes: Trees provide too many ecosystem benefits to be disregarded in the name of housing. One of the most obvious benefits of tree canopy is to increase communities' resilience to the effects of climate change, including reducing the urban heat island effect, stabilizing slopes, retaining soil moisture, and taking up storm water that would otherwise contribute to flooding and erosion. A better solution would be to incentivize jurisdictions to simplify or otherwise add additional flexibility to their tree codes in a way that results in and maintains a resilient urban tree canopy.

## **4. Protecting and Supporting Oregon's Planning Program**

To help ensure cities and counties comprehensively plan for today and future generations, governments at all levels need funding and resources to support healthy, equitable communities and foster great thriving communities.

#### **OAPA supports:**

- Increased funding and technical resources. Governments at all levels need funding and technical resources to support good planning and foster great, thriving

communities.

- OAPA supports resumption of the statutory practice of Required Period Review. This process enables jurisdictions to align comprehensive plans and codes with local, regional and state changes. OAPA emphasizes integrating legislative and rulemaking mandates with periodic reviews so jurisdictions can anticipate and plan for resource needs to carry out planning projects and associated public involvement, ensuring a thoughtful, coordinated and transparent planning approach. The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) budget includes providing grant funding to support periodic review.
- Legislation and rule-making that provides for revising the State Planning Program as needed to address the needs of current and future Oregonians, especially regarding racial equity, environmental justice and climate justice; confronting climate change; and the housing crisis and housing production.
- State agency coordination: promoting improved coordination among state agencies, aligning with OAPA's legislative and policy priorities. This includes fostering better collaboration between DLCD, ODOT, OHCS and other relevant state agencies.

**OAPA opposes:**

- Weakening Oregon's Planning Program: opposing any efforts aimed at undermining the effectiveness of Oregon's planning program.
- Legislative initiatives impacting capacity: opposing initiatives that disregard the capacity of local planning agencies to meet new demands while maintaining the ongoing level of responsibilities.